



aid Maleen

A traditional story
In simple English
The Stories First Foundation

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A traditional story told
by the Brothers Grimm

Adapted by Stephen Krashen



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A story by the Brothers Grimm
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There was once a King who had a son who proposed marriage to the daughter of another King. The Princess' name was Maid Maleen, and she was very beautiful. But Maid Maleen's father wanted her to marry someone else. Maid Maleen and the King's son were deeply in love, and Maid Maleen told her father that she wouldn't marry anyone else.

The King got very angry and ordered a dark tower to be built. It was so dark that no sunlight or moonlight could enter. When it was done, he said, "You will be a prisoner in this tower for seven years. After that, I will come and see if you have changed your mind."

Maid Maleen and her servant were given enough food to last for seven years and were locked into the dark tower.



The King's son would come to the tower often, walk around it, and call out their names. But the thick walls kept all sounds from reaching them.

The seven years passed, and they were running out of food. There were no signs that anyone was going to release them.

Maid Maleen wondered if her father had forgotten them. She decided that they had to try to break through the tower wall. Otherwise, they would starve to death.

Taking the bread knife, she and her servant took turns trying to loosen the stones in the wall. After a great deal of work, they finally managed to get one stone out, then a second and a third.

After three days, the first ray of light shone into the darkness. At last, the opening was large enough to look through. The sky was blue, and they could feel a fresh breeze on their faces, but clearly a catastrophe had taken place.

Her father's castle was in ruins. The town had been destroyed by fire. The fields were destroyed, and no human being could be seen.

The opening in the wall was large enough for them to slip through, so the servant jumped down first. Then Maid Maleen followed. But where should they go? Enemies had destroyed the kingdom, driven the King away, and killed all the people.

They wandered, looking for shelter, or someone who would give them something to eat.

When they finally reached another country, they tried to find work. But they were turned down everywhere.

Finally, they came to a large city, and went to the royal place. At first, they were turned away, but finally, the cook said they could work in the kitchen.



The King's son was about to be married. He was the same prince who had proposed marriage to Maid Maleen. But his father had chosen another bride for him, a woman whose face was as ugly as her heart was wicked.



The wedding was to take place soon, and the bride had already arrived. But the bride was so ugly, she stayed in her room and didn't let anybody see her. Maid Maleen brought her meals from the kitchen.

Then she said to Maid Maleen, "I just sprained my ankle, and I can't walk through the streets. Put on my wedding dress and take my place at the ceremony. This will be a great honor for you."

Maid Maleen refused, saying, "I don't deserve this kind of honor."

When the bride offered to pay Maid Maleen, she still refused. When the day of the ceremony arrived, the bride was ashamed of her ugliness. She was afraid that if she showed herself in public people would laugh at her.

Then the bride got angry: "If you don't take my place, it will cost you your life. I only have to say the word, and your head will lie at your feet."

So Maid Maleen was forced to obey, and put on the bride's magnificent clothes and jewels.

When she entered the royal hall, everyone was astounded at her great beauty. Then the King said to his son, "This is the bride I chose for you, and whom you must marry."



The Prince was amazed, and thought, "She looks just like my Maid Maleen, but it can't be. She is still locked in the tower, or might even be dead."

He took her by the hand and led her to church. On the way, they passed a nettle-plant, and Maid Maleen said,

"What are you doing here?

Nettle plant so small.

I remember when

I had to eat you raw."



"What did you say?" asked the King's son. "Nothing," she replied, "I was only thinking of Maid Maleen." He was surprised that she knew about her, but said nothing more. When they came to the foot-bridge leading into the churchyard, she said,

"Foot-bridge, please

Hear my voice

I'm not the bride

But I had no choice."

"What did you say?" asked the King's son. "Nothing," said Maid Maleen, "I was only thinking about Maid Maleen."

He asked, "Do you know Maid Maleen?"

"No," she answered, "How could I know her? I have only heard of her."

When they came to the church door, she said,
"Church door, please
Allow me inside,
Even though I'm not
The Prince's true bride."

"What did you say?" asked the Prince.
"Nothing," she answered, "I was only thinking
of Maid Maleen."

Then he took out a beautiful gold necklace,
and put it around her neck.

They then entered the church, and the priest
joined their hands together before the altar
and married them.

The Prince took her home, but she did not
speak a single word the whole way. When
they got back to the royal palace, she hurried
into the bride's bedroom, took off the
magnificent clothes, dressed in her own gray
dress, and only kept the necklace she received
from the Prince.



When the night came, the bride was led to the
Prince's bedroom. But she covered her face
with a veil.

As soon as they were alone, the prince said to
his bride, "What did you say to the nettle-plant
that was growing alongside the path?"

"What nettle-plant?" she asked. "I don't talk to
nettle-plants."

"If you didn't talk to the nettle-plant, you are
not my true bride," he said.

The ugly bride then said, "I will have to talk to
my servant. She keeps track of my thoughts for
me."

She went out and found Maid Maleen. "Girl, what did you say to the nettle?"

Maid Maleen responded, "All I said was:

‘What are you doing here?

Nettle plant so small.

I remember when

I had to eat you raw.’”

The bride ran back to the Prince, and said, "Now I remember what I said to the nettle," and she repeated the words Maid Maleen told her.

"But what did you say to the foot-bridge when we went over it?" asked the King's son.

"To the foot-bridge?" she answered, "I don't talk to foot-bridges."

"Then you aren't the true bride," said the prince.

Once again, she said, "I will have to talk to my servant. She keeps track of my thoughts for me."

Again, she went out and found Maid Maleen. "Girl, what did you say to the foot-bridge?"

Maid Maleen responded, "All I said was,

‘Foot-bridge, please

Hear my voice

I'm not the bride

But I had no choice.’”

The bride screamed at Maid Maleen, "This will cost you your life!"

Then she ran back to the Prince, and said, "Now I remember what I said to the foot-bridge," and she repeated the words Maid Maleen told her.

"But what do you say to the church door?" asked the prince.

"To the church door?" she replied; "I don't talk to church doors."

“Then you aren't the true bride,” he said.

She went out and found Maid Maleen, and said, "Girl, what did you say to the church door?"

"All I said was:

‘Church door, please
Allow me inside,
Even though I'm not
The Prince's true bride.’”

"I am going to break your neck!" she yelled, and flew into a terrible rage. But first, she ran back to the Prince.

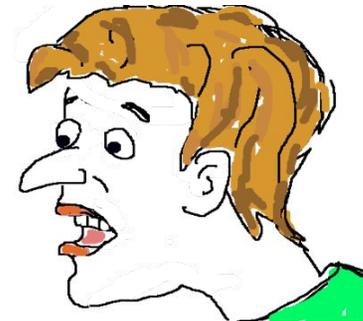
Then the ugly bride said, "Now I remember what I said to the church door." She repeated the words that Maid Maleen had told her.

"But what did you do with the necklace I gave you at the church door?"

"What necklace?" she answered; "You didn't give me a necklace."

"I put it around your neck myself. If you don't know that, you aren't my bride."

He drew the veil from her face. When he saw her incredible ugliness, he jumped back, terrified. "How did you get here?" said the prince. "Who are you?"



"I am your bride," she answered. "But I was afraid that people would laugh at me when they saw me. I ordered the servant girl to wear my clothes and take my place in the church."

"Where is the girl?" he said; "I want to see her. Go and bring her here."

She went out and told the servants that Maid Maleen was an impostor, and she ordered them to kill her.

The servants took Maid Maleen and tried to take her away, but she screamed so loudly for help that the Prince heard her. He rushed out of his room and saw Maid Maleen.

The prince saw the gold necklace he had given her around her neck and said, "You are my bride, the one who went to the church with me."

The prince ordered the servants to set her free immediately. "Come with me," he said.

When they were alone, he said, "On the way to the church, you mentioned Maid Maleen. She was to be my wife seven years ago. You look so much like her in every way!"

She answered, "I am Maid Maleen. Because of our love, I was a prisoner in the dark tower for seven years, where I suffered from hunger and thirst. But today the sun is shining on me again. We were just married in the church, and I am your lawful wife."

They kissed and were happy for the rest of their lives. The false bride was punished for what she had done by having her head cut off.

The tower in which Maid Maleen had been imprisoned remained standing for a long time.



When the children passed by it, they sang:

"Kling, Klang, Gloria.

Who sits in this dark tower?
A King's daughter sits inside,
More lonely every hour.

The wall cannot be broken
The stone is strong and thick
Little Hans, with your pretty coat
Follow me and be quick."

THE END